

INSIDE REPORT

Bush and the Lithuanians: good-cop, bad-cop strategy

PRESIDENT Bush's surprisingly cordial welcome for visiting Lithuanian Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene, after weeks of toadying to Mikhail Gorbachev's hard line against Baltic independence, resulted partly from the exuberant congressional reception she was accorded and partly from his good-cop, bad-cop strategy.

As bad cop, Bush refuses to speak the word "independence" for fear of affronting Gorbachev.

But when Senate leaders informed him they would vote this past week on a resolution opposing the new U.S.-Soviet trade pact until Gorbachev ends his economic strangulation of Lithuania, Bush gave a wink and a nod: Be my guest. That was good-cop Bush.

The president was taken aback by the enthusiastic reception Prunskiene was given on Capitol Hill and by the media.

The State Department had no intention of seeing her until the White House asked her into the Oval Office.

THE unannounced recruitment of Republican Rep. Patricia Saiki to run for the Hawaii Senate seat held by the late Sen. Spark Matsunaga caused the shedding of bitter tears by Edward J. Rollins, co-chairman of the National Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, because the odds favor replacement of Matsunaga by a Democrat.

The Senate Republican Campaign Committee persuaded Saiki to leave a relatively safe GOP House seat for a Senate campaign most politicians believe she will lose. Hawaii's powerful Democratic Sen. Daniel Inouye "will move heaven and earth" to prevent Saiki from beating Democratic Rep. Daniel K. Akaka, the seven-term House member



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who will be named May 16 to fill Matsunaga's seat.

Rollins' failure to persuade GOP leaders that a House seat in the hand is worth more than a Senate seat in the bush brings to 11 the number of House Republican incumbents who will run either for governor or the Senate next Nov. 6. That damages Republican prospects for making gains in the House.

THE U.S. embassy in San Salvador was stunned to learn that Democratic Rep. David Nagle of Iowa would be accompanied on his fact-finding trip to El Salvador this coming week by Melinda DeLashmut, wife of the communist-led FMLN guerrilla movement's chief envoy to Washington, Francisco Altschul.

DeLashmut, an official of the Salvador-bashing International Center for Development Policy, was quickly removed from the list. Nagle told us her presence was a "one-day thought" and expressed irritation with the State Department for stirring up trouble.

But the International Center (headed by left-wing diplomat Robert White, who was Jimmy Carter's ambassador to Salvador) is paying for Nagle's trip. DeLashmut is being replaced on the congressman's touring party by her colleague at the International Center, Alfredo Forti.